

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: TORRIJOS SPEECH IN VERAGUAS

SUMMARY: SPEAKING IN VERAGUAS BEFORE A SEMINAR FOR GOVERNORS, MAYORS AND OTHER PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS GENERAL TORRIJOS DISCUSSED THE DEFINITION OF NATIONAL LIBERATION, RESTATED THAT TREATY SUBSTANCE AND "PALATABILITY" OUTWEIGH TREATY TIMING, AND NOTED ONCE AGAIN THAT PANAMA'S CANAL "CAUSE" IS NOT HER ALONE, BUT BELONGS TO THE HEMISPHERE AS WELL. HIS WORDS ON TREATY TIMING ARE OBVIOUSLY AN EFFORT TO MANAGE POLITICAL PRESSURES AND BUY TIME IN WHICH TO COMPLETE THE NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT TORRIJOS ADDRESSED A TRAINING SEMINAR SPONSORED BY THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE AND THE DIGEDECOM (GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY) FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS, MAYORS AND TOWN TREASURERS IN VERAGUAS PROVINCE JANUARY 31. HIS SPEECH HAS BEEN GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN PANAMANIAN MEDIA YESTERDAY (SUNDAY) AND TODAY. TORRIJOS' REMARKS COVERED A VARIETY OF THEMES RANGING FROM THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND NATIONAL
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DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS, TO CANAL NEGOTIATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL

SUPPORT FOR PANAMA'S POSITION IN THEM. FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS
OF THE SPEECH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO DEPARTMENT.

2. TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. THE TEXT OF THE NEW CANAL TREATY,
NOT THE TIMING OF IT IS WHAT COUNTS, AVERRED TORRIJOS. A
YEAR MORE OR LESS, OR TWO YEARS MORE OR LESS ARE NOT IMPORTANT.
WHAT IS IMPORTANT, HE STATED, IS "THE SUBSTANCE AND THE TYPE
OF AGREEMENT WE REACH". CONTINUING, HE NOTED, "WHEN I CONTRACTED
WITH THE PEOPLE OF THIS NATION TO SUBMIT A NEW CANAL
TREATY TO THEIR CONSIDERATION AN ANALYSIS I DID SO WITH THE
OBLIGATION TO PRESENT A PALATABLE, AND ACCEPTABLE, TREATY."
AND FURTHER, "IF WE HAD ACTED DECEITFULLY, DEMAGOGICALLY OR
DISHONESTLY I MIGHT HAVE ALREADY BEEN ABLE TO PRESENT THE COUNTRY
WITH A TREATY. BUT IT WOULD BE A TREATY THAT WOULD NOT STAND
UP TO THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE OF ANALYSIS BY OUR GENERATION, BY
OUR PEOPLE."

3. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR PANAMA IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.
OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS PANAMA'S STRUGGLE FOR FULL SOVEREIGNTY
OVER HER NATIONAL TERRITORY HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO THE
"RELIGION OF LATIN AMERICA", INTO THE MAJOR CONCERN OF THIS
CONTINENT, TORRIJOS DECLARED. HE ADDED, "OUR PROBLEM OVER THE
CANAL IS NOT JUST A PROBLEM FOR ONE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED
THOUSAND PANAMANIAN'S BUT FOR ALL LATIN AMERICA. SHOULD THE
CANAL PROBLEM NOT COME TO BE RESOLVED IT CAN ONLY SIGNIFY
THE INDIFFERENCE AND NEGLECT WITH WHICH THE UNITED STATES WILL
CONTINUE TO TREAT LATIN AMERICA. THERE CAN BE NO JUST UNDER-
STANDING OR DIALOGUE (WITH THE U.S.) WHILE PANAMA'S
SOVEREIGNTY IS TRAMPLED ON". ALL LATIN AMERICA,
TORRIJOS APPENDED, WILL FOCUS ON THIS PROBLEM WHEN THE
HEMISPHERE'S CHIEFS OF STATE GATHER FOR THE AMPHICTYONIC
CONGRESS HERE IN JUNE.

4. WHAT IS NATIONAL LIBERATION? LIBERATION IS NOT ONLY WHEN
COLONIAL VESTIGES, OR COLONIAL ENCLAVES ARE ERADICATED BUT ALSO
"WHEN LAND TITLES ARE GRANTED (IN REFERENCE TO AGRARIAN REFORM
AND DEEDING OF PEASANT PROPRIETORS), WHEN AN ILLITERATE IS
TAUGHT TO READ, WHEN SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE GIVEN AN EDUCATION,
WHEN A FARMER PLANTS MORE ACREAGE, WHEN THE WORKER APPLIES
HIMSELF TO HIS TASK-THE SWEAT OF THE GENERATION WHICH IS
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STRUGGLING FREES THE NATION." IN THIS SAME VEIN TORRIJOS
REMARKED, "IT IS EASY TO GET UP ON A NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL
DAIS AND TALK OF COLONIALISM, CONDEMN IT AND SAY WE ARE GOING
TO BE FREE. BUT WE HAVE TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO OUR FREEDOM THROUGH
WORK, AND THAT'S WHAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN DOING NOW."

5. COMMENT: IT IS WHEN GENERAL TORRIJOS CLOTHES HIMSELF IN
THE VESTMENTS OF REMARKS LIKE THESE THAT HE SHOWS TO HIS

BEST. THE EXTENDED DEFINITION OF NATIONAL LIBERATION COULD NOT BE GAINSAID BY ANYONE NO MATTER HOW CONSERVATIVE.HIS EMPHASIS ON TREATY SUBSTANCE RATHER THAN TIMING REITERATES A CONCERN HE HAS PUBLICIZED SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE, BUT WHICH IN LIGHT OF RECENT PRESS ARTICLES, AND STATEMENTS SECONDING THEM FROM HIGH-LEVEL PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS, BEARS REPEATING AT THIS JUNCTURE. HIS REMARKS ON TIMING ARE OBVIOUSLY INTENDED TO STAVE OFF "ALL OR NOTHING" PRESSURES FOR COMPLETING THE NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND ARE PART OF HIS MANAGEMENT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY ARE CONDUCTED. UNFORTUNATELY NEITHER THE SEVERE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM UPON HIS RETURN FROM COLOMBIA, NOR HIS ACTIONS AGAINST THE BUSINESS PROTESTS OF THE LAST TWO WEEKS REFLECTED THE SAME VEIN OF JUDICIOUS PATIENCE OR REVOLUTIONARY PRAGMATISM HE HAS MANIFESTED IN THIS VERAGUAS ADDRESS.
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